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Alaskan refugees

# ALASKAN

## NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES

Refuge leaflet 92.R3 1969

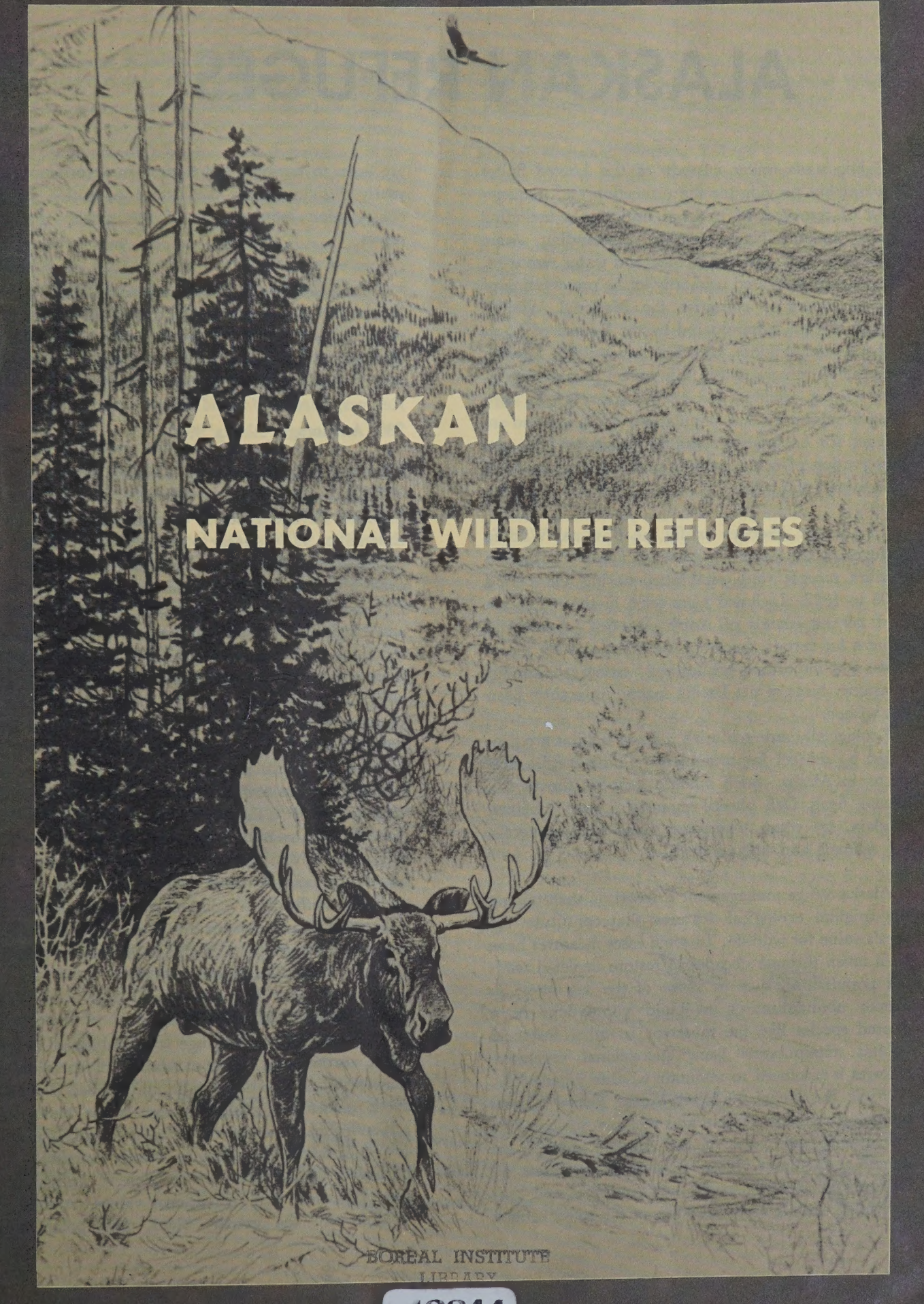
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# ALASKAN NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGES

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# ALASKAN REFUGES

Public lands under custody of the United States Government provide for the protection and management of resources of national importance including timber, grazing lands, wildlife, outstanding scenic or natural areas, historic shrines, and water resources. Those lands dedicated primarily to the preservation of wildlife resources comprise the National Wildlife Refuge System, administered by the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Nearly 330 refuges within this system provide significant nesting, feeding, and resting areas for the continental migratory bird population. Included also are refuges for endangered wildlife species and for the preservation of ecologically important associations of animal and plant life.

This leaflet describes briefly the National Wildlife Refuges in the State of Alaska. The first Alaskan wildlife refuges were established during the period 1908 to 1912. Included were some of the major sea bird nesting islands of North America. Additional refuges for certain species of big game and sea mammals, and important nesting and resting grounds for migratory birds of the Pacific region, have since been established.

Ecologically representative units of habitat are provided by refuges for prominent wildlife species that occur in Alaska. Such wildlife includes the moose, brown bear, Dall sheep, mountain goat, caribou, muskox, sea otter, trumpeter swan, and numerous fur animals and upland birds.

Alaska refuge management is based on maintaining the original ecological features that constitute the area's value for wildlife. In some cases measures have been taken through decades to restore depleted wildlife populations, such as those of the sea otter, to former abundance, or to build populations of a desired species like the muskox. In other instances habitat manipulation using successional vegetative changes is employed to maintain wildlife populations.

While the Kenai National Moose Range adjoins human population centers and receives much public recreational use, most of the Alaskan refuges are remote and without visitor facilities. Nevertheless, all can provide rewards to the well-equipped and self-sustaining wildlife observer. Nine of the larger refuges

are open to hunting and fishing, in accordance with yearly regulations, to the extent permitted by the conservation requirements of the species the area serves.

A brief description of each Alaskan Refuge follows. Informational leaflets and bird lists for most major refuges are available from the office of the Refuge Manager at the mailing address indicated. For general information, address the Supervisor, Alaskan Wildlife Refuges, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, Box 280, Anchorage, Alaska 99501.

## **Aleutian Islands National Wildlife Refuge**

This is the third largest unit of the National Wildlife Refuge System, covering 2,720,200 acres. Extending 1,000 linear miles westward from the Alaska Peninsula, it includes 200 islands, and comprises all of the Aleutian Chain with the exception of Akun, Akutan, Sanak, Sedanka, Tigalda, Umnak, and Unalaska. A multiple purpose area, it provides sanctuary for numerous colonies of sea birds. A primary objective is the restoration of the sea otter. This objective nears fulfillment, for during more than 50 years of refuge status sea otters have increased from near extinction to a population estimated at 20,000. Unimak Island, at the eastern end of the refuge, has faunal and floral characteristics of the Alaska Peninsula, and supports the Alaska brown bear and caribou. Portions of the refuge are open to the hunting of migratory birds, upland game, and big game. All waters are open to sport fishing. Although access is generally difficult, a commercial airline serves the Aleutians. Many airfields are within military defense zones and require prior clearance for visitors. Mailing address: Cold Bay, Alaska 99571.

## **Arctic National Wildlife Range**

This 8,900,000-acre refuge was established in 1960 in the northeastern corner of Alaska. It represents the only opportunity to preserve an undisturbed portion of arctic environment large enough to be biologically self-sufficient. It is one of the most magnificent wildlife and wilderness areas in North America. The objectives of the range are to preserve unique wildlife, wilderness, and recreational values. Among the wildlife are the grizzly, black, and polar bears,



### **Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge**

This 1,815,000-acre area, established in 1941, includes the southwestern two-thirds of Kodiak Island. Ruggedly mountainous, the refuge provides natural habitat for the Kodiak brown bear. Extensive stream systems on the island are used by spawning salmon and hence support the valuable Kodiak commercial salmon industry. The refuge provides consistently successful hunting and a high percentage of top Alaska brown bear trophies. Opportunities for brown bear photography are possible through the use of aerial transportation to the interior of the island. Guiding service for hunting and photography, available in and around Kodiak, is required for nonresidents. Headquarters address: Refuge Manager, Box 825, Kodiak, Alaska 99615.

### **Nunivak National Wildlife Refuge**

This refuge, a tundra-covered island of volcanic origin, includes 1,109,400 acres in the Bering Sea 150 miles west of Bethel. It is the home of the only muskox herd in the United States. The refuge, established in 1929, serves as a sanctuary for the development of this herd that may be used to restock former muskox habitat in Alaska. Transported from Greenland in 1930, the herd made slow gains for many years. Recently, however, numbers have increased to the point where it is possible to provide animals for restocking. A large reindeer herd, under management of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, shares the refuge. Coastal lagoons on the south side of the island are utilized as resting and feeding areas by brant and Canada geese during migration. Vast sea bird rookeries are on the sea cliffs of the western coast of the island. The Eskimo village of Mekoryuk is served by regular air transportation. Administered by the Refuge Manager, Box 346, Bethel, Alaska 99559.

### **St. Lazaria National Wildlife Refuge**

This island refuge comprising 65 acres is at the entrance of Sitka Sound, about 12 miles from Sitka. Established in 1909, it includes sea bird rookeries.

Closed to hunting and fishing. For further information, write to: Supervisor, Alaskan National Wildlife Refuges, Box 280, Anchorage, Alaska 99501.

### **Semidi National Wildlife Refuge**

The islands in this refuge comprise 8,400 acres. The group is in the North Pacific approximately 100 miles off the southwest end of Kodiak Island. The refuge supports large sea bird rookeries including colonies of puffins, auklets, petrels, murre, and kittiwakes, together with an enormous colony of fulmars. A large sea lion rookery is on the south end of the group. With precipitous shorelines and few sheltered beaches, the islands are seldom visited by vessels. Administered by the Refuge Manager, Cold Bay, Alaska 99571.

### **Simeonof National Wildlife Refuge**

Simeonof Refuge, in the Shumagin Islands south of the Alaska Peninsula, was established in 1948 to protect the growing sea otter populations in the Shumagins. The refuge includes 10,400 acres. Although the refuge is relatively remote, those interested in the study and observation of sea otters can reach it via chartered vessel or aircraft. Administered by the Refuge Manager, Cold Bay, Alaska 99571.

### **Tuxedni National Wildlife Refuge**

Established in 1909 at the entrance to Tuxedni Harbor on the west side of Cook Inlet, this island refuge includes 6,400 acres. Its principal physical feature is Chisik Island, a precipitous rock mass rising to approximately 2,600 feet. The area supports a vast black-legged kittiwake colony extending about 2 miles, together with associated colonial nesting sea-fowl. Access to the area is by vessel or chartered aircraft. Administered by the Refuge Manager, Box 500, Kenai, Alaska 99611.



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caribou, Dall sheep, moose, wolverines and other fur animals, waterfowl, and upland nesting birds. Management is directed to maintaining natural conditions. This refuge is expected to yield rich results from studies of biological features of an undisturbed arctic environment. The well-equipped outdoorsman will find wide opportunities for wilderness hiking, hunting, and fishing. Travel to the area is by private or charter aircraft only. Administered by the Supervisor, Alaskan Wildlife Refuges, Box 280, Anchorage, Alaska 99501.

#### Bering Sea National Wildlife Refuge

This refuge, comprising St. Matthew and Hall Islands in the Bering Sea, was established in 1909 primarily for migratory birds. It is 250 miles from the mainland of Alaska, lying west of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta, and contains 41,100 acres. Within this refuge is a colonial sea bird nesting area 5 miles long. This rookery contains one of the largest fulmar colonies in existence, together with parakeet auklets, horned puffins, pelagic cormorants, and thick-billed murre. The rare McKay's bunting nests only on the uplands of St. Matthew Island. Remote, uninhabited, and infrequently visited by vessels, the islands offer little opportunity for the casual visitor. Administered by the Refuge Manager, Box 346, Bethel, Alaska 99559.

#### Bogoslof National Wildlife Refuge

This refuge of 390 acres consists of small volcanic islets in the Bering Sea, 30 miles north of Umnak Island in the Aleutian Chain. Established in 1909, it has important sea bird rookeries, including one of the largest thick-billed and common murre colonies in Alaska. Red-faced cormorants are also prominent in the nesting populations. Large and well-known sea lion colonies occupy available beaches. Remote and uninhabited, this refuge is not easily visited. Administered by the Refuge Manager, Cold Bay, Alaska 99571.

#### Chamisso National Wildlife Refuge

This is one of the most important breeding areas for arctic sea birds on the northwest coast of Alaska. It consists of Chamisso Island, Puffin Island, and adjacent islets in Kotzebue Sound. Established in 1912, it is 641 acres in extent. Prominent species include horned puffins, thick-billed murre, black-legged kittiwakes, and gulls. Closed to hunting. Administered by the Refuge Manager, Box 346, Bethel, Alaska 99559.

#### Cape Newenham National Wildlife Refuge

Established in 1969, Cape Newenham Refuge occupies 265,000 acres on the peninsula between Bristol and Kuskokwim Bays that terminates in the steep-cliffed Cape Newenham. A million or more murre, kittiwakes, puffins, and other marine birds inhabit a nesting colony that is possibly the largest in North America. Two large bays containing extensive eelgrass beds support several hundred thousand waterfowl each spring and fall. Tributary streams are spawning grounds for large runs of commercially important anadromous fish. There are grizzly bears on Cape Newenham, but the most common mammals are marine—hair seals, sea lions, and walrus. Administered by the Refuge Manager, Box 346, Bethel, Alaska 99559.

#### Clarence Rhode National Wildlife Range

A migratory bird nesting area, this refuge was established in December 1960. It includes 2,817,000 acres of low-lying tundra on the Bering Sea coast extending from the Kinak River to Kokechik Bay and the delta at the north mouth of the Yukon River. It is the primary nesting area for the cackling Canada goose and the major nesting grounds of the black brant. A high percentage of Alaska's emperor geese breeds here. Other breeding waterfowl include the Taverner's Canada goose, white-fronted goose, whistling swan, eiders, pintail, greater scaup, common scoter, and oldsquaw. Sandhill cranes and numerous shore birds also nest on the refuge. Waterfowl hunting is permitted. A summer field headquarters is maintained on the Kashunuk River. No accommodations are available. Transportation to and from the refuge is through commercial aircraft charter at Bethel. Administered by the Refuge Manager, Box 346, Bethel, Alaska 99559.

#### Forrester Island National Wildlife Refuge

Established in 1912, this refuge is at the extreme southeastern boundary of Alaska west of Ketchikan. It comprises 2,800 acres and consists of Forrester and Lourie Islands, as well as Wolf and other adjacent rocks. These wooded islands provide sanctuary for cliff-nesting sea birds including murre, puffins, auklets, gulls, and cormorants. Closed to hunting and fishing. Administered by the Supervisor, Alaskan Wildlife Refuges, Box 280, Anchorage, Alaska 99501.



Musk Ox

Reindeer  
Blue Fox

#### Hazen Bay National Wildlife Refuge

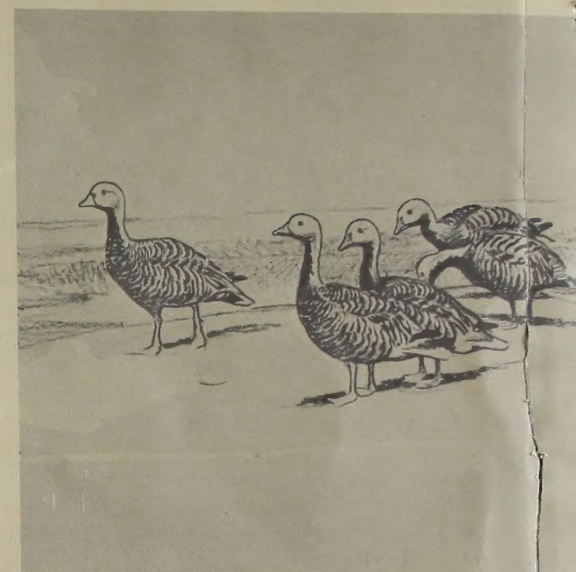
This refuge consists of Kigigak Island, north of Nelson Island on the Bering Sea coast. It was established in 1937 and comprises 6,800 acres. Consisting of low-lying tundra, it is a concentrated nesting area for the black brant and cackling Canada goose. Emperor geese, oldsquaws, greater scaups, and other waterfowl also nest here. The refuge is adjacent to and similar in function to the much larger Clarence Rhode National Wildlife Range. Closed to hunting and trapping. Administered by the Refuge Manager, Box 346, Bethel, Alaska 99559.

#### Hazy Islands National Wildlife Refuge

These wooded islets totaling 42 acres were established as a refuge in 1912 to protect sea bird colonies. The refuge is off the coast of southeast Alaska approximately 15 miles south of Baranof Island. Administered by the Refuge Manager, Box 500, Kenai, Alaska 99611.

#### Izembek National Wildlife Range

Established in 1960, this refuge of 415,000 acres is on the tip of the Alaska Peninsula. A valuable waterfowl feeding area, it provides vast eelgrass beds in Izembek Bay. Its tidal lagoons support the continent's entire black brant population for 2 to 3 months of each year, hence this refuge is essential to the survival



Emperor Geese

of this species. It is also a principal migration stop for cackling and Taverner's Canada geese and a number of other species during the fall and early winter. Hunting for waterfowl and ptarmigan is popular. Upland areas are a favored range for the Alaska brown bear and caribou. Spectacular in scenic features, the refuge provides an unusual opportunity for the observation of many species of waterfowl. Limited accommodations are available at Cold Bay through airlines which serve the area. Administered by the Refuge Manager at Cold Bay, Alaska 99571.

#### Kenai National Moose Range

Established in 1941 primarily for the management of moose, this area of 1,730,000 acres occupies the western slopes of the Kenai Mountains and the glaciated lowland bordering Cook Inlet. The refuge also provides important habitat for Dall sheep, mountain goats, brown and black bears, fur animals, upland game animals, and waterfowl. The lake-dotted lowland is a nesting ground for the rare trumpeter swan, and excellent trout habitat. Hunting, fishing, camping, boating, and other temporary uses are permitted. Trapping, timber cutting, and other commercial uses are under permit issued by the Refuge Manager at Kenai. Recreation facilities are provided in the form of campgrounds, picnic sites, and hiking and canoe trails. Headquarters are in Kenai, Box 500, 99611.

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